तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Stay with Devotees

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Our policy is to live with devotees. Immediately return and live with devotees and take care of the deities and *tulasī*. That is our main business. My guru maharaja condemned living alone in a lonely place. He wrote as follows:

duṣṭa mana! tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?
pratiṣṭhāra tare, nirjanera ghare,
tava hari-nāma kevala kaitava

"O rascal mind, what kind of *vaiṣṇava* are you? In a lonely place your chanting of Hare Krishna is simply cheating." (*Vaiṣṇava Ke*?, verse 1)

And, Narottama Das Thakura says:

tāndera caraṇa sevi bhakta-sane vāsa
janame janame hoy ei abhilāṣa

"To serve the feet of the *ācāryas* in association of the devotees is my desire birth after birth." (*Nāma-saṅkīrtana* 7)

This is why I have opened this society. I was living with four children, and now I have 4,000. It is not good to live alone. ❀

— Letter to Govinda Dasi, 11 November 1973.

Unhealthy Association

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Śrī Caitanya-śīkṣāmṛta *3.3*

There are ten types of forbidden activity:[1]

1) *bahirmukha-jana-saṅga* — association with materialists [2]
2) *anubandha* — establishing unfavorable relationships
3) *mahā-rastādira udyama* — attempting huge projects [that are beyond one's means]
4) *bahu grantha-kalābhyāsa o vyākyāvāda* — diverting one's energies to many different endeavors based upon various books and precepts

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[1] *nāsac-chāstreṣu sajjeta nopajīveta jīvikām*
vāda-vādāṁs tyajet tarkān pakṣaṁ kaṁca na saṁśrayet

Literature that is a useless waste of time — in other words, literature without spiritual benefit — should be rejected. One should not become a professional teacher as a means of earning one's livelihood, nor should one indulge in arguments and counter-arguments. Nor should one take shelter of any cause or faction.

na śiṣyān anubadhnīta granthān naivābhyased bahūn
na vyākhyām upayuñjīta nārambhān ārabhet kvacit

A *sannyāsī* must not present allurements of material benefits to gather many disciples, nor should he unnecessarily read many books or give discourses as a means of livelihood. He must never attempt to increase material opulences unnecessarily. (*Bhāg.* 7.13.7-8)

[2] *sat-saṅgāc chanakaiḥ saṅgam ātma-jāyātmajādiṣu*
vimucyen mucyamāneṣu svayaṁ svapnāvad utthitaḥ

A *gṛhastha* should gradually become detached from the association of the bodies of his wife and children exactly like a man awakening from a dream. (*Bhāg.* 7.14.4)

next column ☞

5) *kārpaṇya* — miserliness [3]

6) *śokādi-dvārā baśī-bhūta haoyā* — falling into lamentation etc.[4]

7) *anya devatāra prati avajñā* — being disrespectful to the *devatas* [5]

8) *bhūta-sakalake udvega dāna* — giving trouble to other living entities

9) *sevāparādha o nāmāparādha* — offenses committed in service to the Lord or to the Lord's holy name.

10) *bhagavan-nindā o bhāgavata-nindāra anumodana vā sahāyatā kara*— tolerating criticism of the Lord and his devotee.

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[3] *jihvaikato 'cyuta vikarṣati māvitṛptā*
śiśno 'nyatas tvag-udaraṁ śravaṇaṁ kutaścit
ghrāṇo 'nyataś capala-dṛk kva ca karma-śaktir
bahvyaḥ sapatnya iva geha-patiṁ lunanti

My dear Lord, O infallible one, my position is like that of a person who has many wives, all trying to attract him in their own way. For example, the tongue is attracted to palatable dishes, the genitals to sex with an attractive woman, and the sense of touch to contact with soft things. The belly, although filled, still wants to eat more, and the ear, not attempting to hear about you, is generally attracted to cinema songs. The sense of smell is attracted to yet another side, the restless eyes are attracted to scenes of sense gratification, and the active senses are attracted elsewhere. In this way I am certainly embarrassed. (*Bhāg*. 7.9.40)

[4] *śokāmarṣādibhir bhāvair ākrāntaṁ yasya mānasam*
kathaṁ tatra mukundasya sphūrtiḥ sambhāvanā bhavet

[In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said]: How can Mukunda, whose smile is beautiful like a pearl-white lotus flower, manifest in a mind that is overwhelmed with lamentation, sorrow, etc? (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.115)

[5] *harir eva sadārādhyaḥ sarva-deveśvareśvaraḥ*
itare brahma-rudrādyā nāvajñeyāḥ kadācana

Krishna, or Hari, is the master of all demigods, and therefore he is always worshipable. But this does not mean that one should not offer respect to the demigods headed by Brahma and Shiva. *(Padma Purāṇa)*

mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān hitvā bhūta-patīn atha
nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ

Those who are serious about liberation are certainly non-envious, and they respect all. Yet they reject the horrible and ghastly forms of the demigods and worship only the all-blissful forms of Lord Vishnu and his plenary portions. (*Bhāg*. 1.2.26)

Materialists are of six types:

1) *nīti-rahita evaṁ īśvara-viśvāsa-rahita vyakti* — people devoid of faith in the Lord and without moral standards

2) *naitika atha ca īśvara-viśvāsa-rahita vyakti* — people with morals but no faith in God

3) *seśvara-naitika, yini īśvarake nītira adhīna baliyā jānena* — people with morals and faith in God, but who consider God to be subservient to morality

4) *mithyācārī vā dāmbhika* (*vaiḍāla-vratika, vaka-vratika o tat-kartṛka vañcita)* — pretenders and proud persons (those exhibiting the vow of the cat, the vow of the crane and other such cheaters)[6]

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[6] *dambhākrāntāścaranty e te sadācāra-ratā iva*
svārthaika-sādhakā hy ete muni-veśā naṭā iva

Deceitful and hypocritical persons may exhibit a high standard of external behavior. Motivated only for the fulfillment of their selfish desires, they wear the dress of saintly persons like actors upon a stage.

vistārya vāgurāṁ vyādho mṛgānākāṅkṣate yathā
prapañcya sat-kriyām evaṁ dāmbhikā dhaninām dhanaṁ

As a hunter spreads a net, desiring to capture a deer, in the same way these hypocrites capture the wealth of rich men by spreading a net of ritualistic activities.

haranti dasyavo 'ṭavyāṁ vimohy āstrair nṛṇāṁ dhanaṁ
pavitrair atitīkṣnāgrai grāmeṣv evaṁ vaka-vratāḥ

As plunderers take away the wealth of men in the forest by threatening them with sharp weapons, similarly, the charlatan meditators take away the wealth of people in the villages by the sharp-pointed *kuśa* grass used in the ritualistic ceremonies that they perform. [The term used here for charlatan meditator is "*vaka-vratāḥ*", which means "the vow of the crane". A crane appears to perform great austerities by standing very still on one leg for a long period of time, but its only desire is to catch fish.]

prakaṭaṁ patitaḥ śreyān ya ekoyātyadhaḥ svayaṁ
vaka-vṛttiḥ svayaṁ pāpaḥ pātayaty aparān api

One who commits a sin openly falls down alone, but those who act like the crane make many people fall.

channa-paṅke sthala-dhiyā patanti bahavo nanu
baiḍāla-vratiko 'py evaṁ saṅga-sambhaṣaṇārccanaiḥ

Just as many fall into quicksand along the riverbank, mistaking it to be dry land, similarly, many spiritual aspirants are doomed by following these hypocrites, for they are like a cat who recites a vow to be a saintly vegetarian in order to attract the worship of the mice. (*Śrī Hari Bhakti-sudhodaya*, 19.54, 56-59)

5) *nirviśeṣavādī* — impersonalists

6) *bahv-īśvara-vādī* — polytheists.

Those who have no respect for God or morality engage in sinful activities. Without moral conduct they simply do whatever they wish. Such persons, desirous of sense pleasure and personal gain, create great inauspiciousness in the world. Those who accept morality but do not accept God argue that moral conduct should be followed out of duty, without fear of God. They forget that faith in God is a significant element in moral conduct. It will be seen, however, that if there is no respect for God, moral codes cannot be followed properly. Will not such people sacrifice moral conduct for their own benefit if an opportunity arises? By examining their character one can discover the impractical nature of their philosophy. Where self-interest arises, the moral codes will be violated.

The third type of persons has belief in God, but that belief is subservient to their morality. They are of two types. One maintains that worship of God is important, but do not believe in his actual existence. They believe there is no harm in imagining a God and worshipping him with faith, and then abandoning the worship when good conduct is achieved. The second type believes that by performing activities of worship of the Lord such as *sandhyā-vandana*, the heart will become purified, *brahman* realization will be achieved, and at that point one has no more duties to anyone. This relationship with God is like a temporary meeting of travelers at an inn. Both these types are averse to devotion.

The fourth type, also adverse to devotion, is the pretender. They may be classified as cheaters and cheated. Though they do not accept the eternal nature of *bhakti*, they wear the dress and markings of a believer. They have their own motives, which any honest person would decry. Cheating everyone, they pave the way for a world of sin. Undiscerning people, allured by their external appearance, take up the same path and end up rejecting God. They have beautiful *tilaka* and dress, chant the name of Krishna, appear detached from the world, and give attractive speeches, but secretly they harbor desires for wealth and women. Many such groups are visible.

The fifth type is the impersonalist. According to these people, when the heart becomes purified by bhakti, the truth will be revealed. The highest truth is liberation — destruction of the soul. As the distinction of soul is destroyed, everything becomes one undifferentiated state. They consider *bhakti* and God to be temporary. For them, acting as a servant of Lord is only a practice, not the goal. If the devotee does not avoid them, his faith in the ontology of *bhakti* will become weak.

Those who accept many gods have no dedication to one. By associating with such people the devotee will also lose his faith in *bhakti*.[7] A devotee must avoid association with these six types of people. Association does not refer to being present in the same meeting, riding in the same boat, bathing at the same place in the river or buying goods in the same store. Association means dealing with them in an intimate mood.[8] That type of association has to be avoided.

Unhealthy relationships are also forbidden for the *vaidhī-bhakta*. There are four types of unhealthy relations: with disciples, with associates, with servants and with friends. By taking unqualified people as disciples for

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[7] *yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena*
tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṁ
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā

As pouring water on the root of a tree energizes the trunk, branches, twigs and everything else, and as supplying food to the stomach enlivens the senses and limbs of the body, simply worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service automatically satisfies the demigods, who are parts of that Supreme Personality. (*Bhāg*. 4.31.14)

[8] *dadāti pratigṛhṇāti guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati*
bhuṅkte bhojayate caiva ṣaḍ-vidhaṁ prīti-lakṣaṇam

Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasāda* and offering *prasāda* are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another.

(*Upadeśāmṛta* verse 4)

wealth and power, great disturbance is created in the *sampradāya*. The *vaiṣṇava* will not initiate disciples if there are no qualified persons. By taking association of those who are not devotees, many types of sinful habits will appear. Therefore such association should be given up. It is not beneficial to take servants unless they are devotees. In making friendship as well the devotee should first consider if that person is a *vaiṣṇava*.

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OUR REAL FRIENDS

***Brahmā Purāṇa* 163.20**

apavādī haret pāpam atithiḥ svarga-saṅkramaḥ
abhyāgataṁ pathi śrāntaṁ sāvajñaṁ yo 'bhivīkṣate

The guest and the critic are the two real kinsmen of the entire universe. The critic dispels sins and the guest bestows heaven.

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AN APPEAL TO THE MIND

By the medieval poet Radha Mohan Das

For more information about Radha Mohan Das, see Bindu issue 95.

(*Aśābarī-rāga*)

(refrain) *bhaja mana nanda-kumāra*
bhāviyā dekhaha bhāi gati nāhi āra

O my mind, please worship Nanda's son. O my brother, please gaze at him with great love. There is no shelter but him.

dhana jana putra ādi kebā āpanāra
atae karaha mana hari-pada sāra

What are wealth, followers, sons, and all else to you? O my mind, please stay at Lord Hari's feet.

ku-saṅga chāḍiyā sadā sat-saṅge thāka
parama nipuṇa iha nāma bali ḍāka

Always turn from bad association. Associate with the saintly devotees. Very carefully chant the Lord's holy names.

tāra nāma-līlā-gāne sadā hao matta
se caraṇa-dhana pābe ha-ibe kṛtārtha

Always be intoxicated by singing the Lord's holy names and glorifying the Lord's pastimes. Then you will attain the treasure that is the Lord's feet. You will attain the goal of life.

rādhā-mohana bale mana ki baliba tore
saṁsāra yātanā āra nāhi deha more

Radha Mohan Das says, "O my mind, please do not do anything that will keep me in the torments of this world of birth and death."

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